

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
Continuation Sheet**

**ASHTON HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT, ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA (000-7819)**

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**6. Function or Use**

EDUCATION/School

RELIGION/Church

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

FUNERARY/Cemetery

EDUCATION/School

RELIGION/Church

RELIGION/Church-Related Residence

FUNERARY/Cemetery

**7. Description**

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> & EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Late Gothic Revival

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> & EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Bungalow/Craftsman

OTHER/Modern

**SUMMARY DESCRIPTION**

Located approximately three miles from Washington, D.C., Ashton Heights is a residential neighborhood in central Arlington County. The neighborhood is bounded by Wilson Boulevard and 10<sup>th</sup> Street North to the north, Arlington Boulevard to the south, North Irving Street on the east, and North Oxford Street on the west. Ashton Heights was first platted and subdivided in 1921 by Ashton C. Jones, who had acquired approximately sixty-one acres of land in 1919. The neighborhood was later expanded on the west to include the area east of North Oakland Street and north of Arlington Boulevard. The northernmost portion of what is today Ashton Heights, to the north of 5<sup>th</sup> Street North, began to develop before 1921 as part of Clarendon. Thus, the neighborhood includes buildings that date from as early as 1900 to the few examples of infill construction dating to the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The original Ashton Heights neighborhood has expanded with numerous additions, totaling 23 sections, and encompassing just over 220 acres. In all, there are 1,104 contributing resources and 162 non-contributing resources within the Ashton Heights Historic District. The community consists today of 781 properties with a total of 1,266 buildings, sites, and structures. Located within the Historic District, the Mathew Maury School was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Ashton Heights is defined by a variety of early 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural styles and building forms.

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Ranging from early-20<sup>th</sup>-century high style to vernacular interpretations of the elaborate styles traditionally erected decades earlier. Architectural styles and forms presented in Ashton Heights illustrate modest examples of Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Bungalow/Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival, Cape Cods, American Foursquare, and pre-fabricated kit houses. Single-family dwellings built prior to 1950, primarily in the Bungalow/Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles, dominate the neighborhood. Ashton Heights is also home to a number of multiple-family apartment buildings, three churches, the Women's Club of Ashton Heights, and Columbia Gardens Cemetery.

The streets in Ashton Heights generally run in a grid pattern with North Pershing Drive, which runs northeast to southwest, bisecting the neighborhood. Mature shade trees, planted as part of the subdivision plan, line many of the streets. The residential lots vary in size with the standard lot being fifty feet wide. The domestic buildings, constructed of both wood frame and masonry, are set back from the road with wide sidewalks buffering them from the public roadways. Many residential properties incorporate driveways, attached or freestanding garages, and sheds. Most of these buildings date from the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, displaying the fashionable architectural styles of the period in which they were constructed.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

**Development Prior to the Platting of Ashton Heights (1900-1920)**

Only one example of the Gothic Revival style was noted in Ashton Heights, located at 812 North Jackson Street. The dwelling, dating from the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has a central-passage, single-pile plan that is augmented by a one-story rear ell. A full-width one-story porch marks the three-bay-wide façade of this modest wood-frame building. Tuscan columns support the porch, which is ornamented by a wide molded cornice. Paired 1/1-replacement windows flank the central entry, which holds a single-leaf door. The Gothic Revival influence is strongly reflected in the very steep pitch of the front gable, set directly over the center bay of the façade. Framed with an overhanging raked cornice, the gable is pierced by a single 1/1 double-hung, wood sash replacement window.

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Three examples of Queen Anne-style dwellings are located within the Historic District at 3509 7<sup>th</sup> Street North, 635 North Lincoln Street, and 502 North Kenmore Street. Popular in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Queen Anne style was typically represented by irregular forms and the extensive use of ornamental motifs executed in wood. Through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the irregular form was lost in favor of the rectangular box. This front-gabled box, complete with full-width or wrapping porch, turned posts, and cornice detailing, typically displayed more restrained applied ornament.

The first example of the Queen Anne style in Ashton Heights at 3509 7<sup>th</sup> Street North represents the earlier irregular form. This dwelling, constructed circa 1905, is two-and-a-half stories in height clad with German wood siding and features an L-shaped footprint capped with a cross-gable roof. The house rests on a solid rock-faced concrete block pier foundation. Across the façade is a one-story wrap-around porch, three bays across and two bays deep, supported with turned posts, square balusters and resting on a rock-faced concrete block pier foundation. The front off-center entry contains a 15-light wood single-leaf door. The façade is illuminated with six 6/1 double-hung, wood sash windows, and a 6-light wood awning window in the upper half story. Features of the house include square-edged wood sills and surrounds, cornerboards, wide eaves with a wood soffit and exposed roof rafters. Rising above the roof, clad in pressed metal shingles, is one central-interior parged brick corbelled chimney.

The wood-frame dwelling at 635 North Lincoln Street, constructed circa 1915, is representative of the dilution of the popular Queen Anne style using the rectangular form. It measures three bays across and two-and-a-half-stories high with a front gable roof. The house rests on a solid rock-faced concrete block foundation and features a one-story full-width half-hipped porch across the façade. The porch is supported with turned posts and square-cut balusters, and sits on rock-faced concrete block piers. The dwelling is clad in weatherboard siding and features an off-center entry with a single-leaf wood door. Other details of the dwelling include cornerboards, square-edged sills and surrounds, wide eaves, and a molded wood cornice.

One of the most prevalent building forms noted in Ashton Heights is the bungalow, making up over 31 percent of the building stock. Like most of the modest bungalows of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these dwellings are often trimmed with stone and brick, half-timbering, exposed rafter ends, multi-light fixed windows, and massive porch supports, thus, melding the bungalow form with the Craftsman style perpetually. This is

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illustrated, for example, on the bungalow at 505 North Jackson Street. Stylistic elements include the rock-faced concrete block foundation, tapered Tuscan posts on masonry piers, full-width front porch, and paired window openings with three vertical lights in the upper sash. As the popularity of the form was heightened during the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the bungalow form of Arlington County was equally embellished with Queen Anne- and Colonial Revival-style detailing. Other examples of Craftsman-style bungalows exist at 526 North Ivy, 508 North Irving, 627 North Jackson, and 429 North Lincoln Streets.

Another of the building forms of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century noted in Ashton Heights is the American foursquare, which was commonly ornamented with Colonial Revival- and Craftsman-style detailing. The two-story, four-room-per-floor house plan without a hall is a much-used concept that refers to the hall/parlor plan of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. One illustration of the several American foursquares exhibiting architectural detailing fashionable in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the house at 904 North Irving Street. This imposing freestanding dwelling was constructed in 1900, twenty years prior to the platting of the surrounding community of Ashton Heights. The building has the characteristically distinguished two-story height, hipped or pyramidal roof with pronounced eaves and dormers that light an extra half-story, large front porch, and the lack of ornate exterior ornament. The overall shape is a cube, and the main entry opening is located off-center. The dwelling at 928 North Ivy Street, constructed in 1906, is clad in stucco and includes features such as thin square wood sills, battered porch posts, a hipped dormer on each elevation, and a central-interior chimney.

**The Evolution of Ashton Heights (1921-1950)**

A surge in residential construction between 1933 and 1940 in Ashton Heights saw the addition of numerous brick Colonial Revival-style buildings constructed on the neighborhood's remaining unimproved lots. The Colonial Revival style, the most popular architectural style in Ashton Heights making up over 60 percent of the building stock, was adapted to meet the housing needs of many suburban neighborhoods in Arlington County in the middle part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently, the larger high-style dwellings were reduced to three-bay-wide rectangular structures with projecting porticos, cornice returns, open pediments, and Tuscan columns. Other features of the Colonial Revival style include stretcher and rowlock beltcourses and water tables, segmental arch lintels, Colonial Revival

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door surrounds with either broken, open, or full pediments, a dentilated cornice, and fluted or flush pilasters.

The two-and-a-half-story dwelling at 612 North Kenmore Street in Ashton Height is an excellent example of a modest Colonial Revival-style dwelling. The brick-clad dwelling has a side entry covered by a wood frame portico. The portico has a front-gable roof with a coved ceiling supported by square Tuscan posts and pilasters. The flanking 6/6 double-hung, wood sash windows have brick sills and soldier-coursed lintels. The side-gable roof has a shallow cornice largely obscured by the metal drainpipe and gutter. Examples of this form are seen at 404 North Nelson Street (clad in stone), 316 North Oakland Street, and 3803 4<sup>th</sup> Street North. More examples, which include an attached garage, are seen at 3741 4<sup>th</sup> Street North, 100 North Oakland Street, 3229 1<sup>st</sup> Place North, and 428 North Nelson Street (featuring a front gable roof).

Another example of the Colonial Revival style is very similar to the one previously described, however, it does not feature a full second story. Wall dormers piercing the cornice serve as the second story on a handful of rectangular brick Colonial Revival-style dwellings. One such dwelling stands at 409 North Oakland Street. This dwelling measures three bays wide and features a stretcher-bond veneer. Two exterior-end corbelled brick chimneys rise above the side-gable roof, and originally an attached garage was seen to the rear of the north (side) elevation. The garage door was removed and sized down, and this space is no longer maintained as a garage. The façade is illuminated with four 6/6 double-hung wood sash windows. The first-story windows feature paneled spandrels, and the second-story wall dormers feature an open pediment clad in weatherboard. The central entry contains a single-leaf paneled wood door and is flanked by 4-light sidelights over a paneled dado and topped by an elliptical transom. Covering the entrance is a gable portico supported with paired Tuscan columns. The roof features overhanging eaves and a molded wood cornice. More modest examples of the Colonial Revival style with wall dormers on the second story are seen at 3718 and 3734 4<sup>th</sup> Street North. These two dwellings feature recessed attached garages with the original two-leaf wood doors in tact.

Similarly, the one-and-a-half-story Cape Cod cottages of the 1930s and 1940s exhibit the familiar detailing and form commonly associated with the Colonial Revival style. This form provided an adequate and affordable housing mode for the growing population of working- and middle-class residents of

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Arlington County, while mimicking the fashionable style of the period. A form identified numerous times throughout the survey area, the Cape Cod dwelling is typically constructed of brick with a side-gable roof and front gable dormers. The examples identified in Ashton Heights are typically three bays wide, two bays deep, and have a central-passage plan. Detailing includes the flat door surrounds with shallow Tuscan pilasters supporting a slightly projecting entablature, a corbeled brick cornice on the facade, and 6/6 double-hung, wood sash windows with brick sills. It is noted that in addition to the denticulated brick cornice, a carved panel was often applied over the main entry. Several examples of Cape Cod dwellings in Ashton Heights include 323 North Oxford Street, 130 and 223 North Oakland Street, and 3223 1<sup>st</sup> Road North.

Ashton Heights has a handful of modest Tudor Revival-style dwellings with 36 examples from this period between 1921 and 1940. As with the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles, many of the Tudor Revival-style resources found in Ashton Heights, and Arlington County as a whole, reflect the suburbanization of the style rather than the initial high-style expression. The distinguishing features in Ashton Heights include multiple-gabled roofs, the placement of an exterior brick chimney on the façade, application of stone as an accenting material around openings or on chimneys, and steeply pitched front gables, sometimes detailed with half-timbering. Both wood frame and brick facing are found as cladding materials on these dwellings.

Examples of Tudor Revival dwellings in Ashton Heights are most often constructed of brick. One example is located at 504 North Lincoln Street. Constructed between 1921 and 1930, this dwelling measures four bays across and is capped with a side-gable roof. It features the typical front-facing shouldered chimney and the front-gabled projecting bay with a steeply pitched roof. Seen here and scattered throughout the neighborhood in the Tudor Revival style and Colonial Revival style is the use of skintled brick. This dwelling rests on a solid stretcher-bond brick foundation, and is illuminated with three 6/6 double-hung wood sash windows and one 8-light casement window. Other features of the house include a 3-light sidelight at the entry, rowlock sills, and a side porch later enclosed. Examples of other masonry Tudor Revival-style dwellings are located at 608 North Jackson, 502 and 510 North Norwood, 600 and 608 North Kenmore Streets.

One example of a wood-frame Tudor Revival dwelling in Ashton Heights is the two-story dwelling at 803

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North Kenmore Street. Constructed circa 1930, this three-bay-wide building has the emblematic front-end shouldered chimney and a side-gable roof with a front projecting gable. The front-gable bay features a steeply pitched roof typical of Tudor Revival dwellings. It rests on a solid stretcher-bond brick foundation and is illuminated with two 8/8 double-hung wood sash windows. Sheltering the entrance is a portico supported with wood posts. Other wood frame examples throughout the community are located at 548 North Piedmont, and 600 and 650 North Jackson Streets.

The Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival styles are sometimes used together to ornament the dwellings in Ashton Heights. For example, a brick one-and-a-half-story dwelling at 18 North Oakland Street, typical of the Cape Cod building form, features a front-gable vestibule with a steeply pitched sloping roof. Other example of this mixture of styles are located at 8 North Oakland Street and 3812 North Pershing Drive. The latter uses the typical rectangular block of the two-story Colonial Revival dwelling and adds a large projecting front-gable bay and a wall dormer, both with steeply pitched roofs.

Ashton Heights and many other early-20<sup>th</sup>-century subdivisions in Arlington County contain examples of kit houses or mail-order houses. The largest, and by far the best known, of the mail-order companies was Sears, Roebuck and Company of Chicago, Illinois. The company began to design and sell house kits in the mid-1890s, and in its three decades of operation, Sears made a substantial contribution to 20<sup>th</sup>-century housing in America. One of the reasons for the popularity of Sears houses was that they consciously reflected popular American tastes of the period. Sears, however, was not the only American company to manufacture or sell houses through mail-order catalogs, nor was it the only company to sell house designs. The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were ripe for entrepreneurs who sold architectural plans as well as the houses themselves. The Hodgson Company, Aladdin Homes, Ray H. Bennett Lumber Company, and Montgomery Ward all had their start in the housing business between 1895 and 1910. All shipping was done by rail; consequently the largest concentration of mail-order houses exist in the Northeast and Midwest, areas that were served by many rail lines.<sup>1</sup>

It has been documented that Arlington County contained numerous genuine examples of mail-order and catalog houses, particularly in those communities located within close proximity to Washington, D.C. and the rail lines. Commonly, builders and real estate developers purchased a plan and proceeded to erect numerous examples of the building based on the original mail-order design. Consequently, positive

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identification of mail-order and catalog houses during a reconnaissance survey is nearly impossible. However, at least ten Sears houses have been identified in Ashton Heights. These include the Clyde, Americus, Sunbeam, Vallonia, Mitchell, Conway, Lenox, Roseberry, Windsor, Westly, and #52 models.<sup>2</sup> An example of the Sunbeam is located at 136 North Irving Street, and at 3203 4<sup>th</sup> Street North is an example of the Vallonia form.

With a total of 67 resources, multiple dwellings also comprise part of the domestic housing stock in Ashton Heights, particularly near the northwest boundaries of the neighborhood. Constructed between 1930 and 1950, these multiple dwellings include both low-rise garden apartments and twin dwellings. Many of these multiple dwellings have diluted references to the Colonial Revival style as frequently seen in buildings that were constructed during the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Constructed in the 1940s, the Kenmore Apartments at 700-708 North Monroe Street is a prime example of the low-rise garden apartment complexes found in Ashton Heights. The three brick apartment buildings that comprise Kenmore Apartments are two stories in height and four bays in width. Colonial Revival-style detailing is largely confined to the entries, which have fluted pilasters and pedimented porticos with brackets.

The community of Ashton Heights also includes the Buckingham Apartments, a garden apartment complex built between 1937 and 1953 in the southwest corner of the neighborhood. Constructed in phases, Buckingham was designed by pioneering garden city architect Henry Wright. The design applied the pioneering principles of garden city planning, which included the use of low-density superblocks, curving streets, the separation of automobiles and pedestrians, shallow building plans, and landscaped common spaces. Although Buckingham Apartments is included in the Ashton Heights neighborhood, the complex is not included in the Ashton Heights Historic District. Instead, the existing Buckingham Historic District, which consists of the oldest section of the complex and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999, should be expanded to include the entire complex.

In addition to the domestic buildings throughout Ashton Heights, there are also civic, religious, educational and commercial buildings. The Women's Club of Ashton Heights at 413 North Irving Street was constructed between 1924 and 1927 in the Bungalow/Craftsman style. Reading as a single-family dwelling, the modest wood-frame clubhouse is set upon a concrete block foundation and has a symmetrical façade with an entrance highlighted by sidelights and a transom. The building has a low-

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pitched hipped roof and a hipped entry porch supported by Tuscan columns.

The Arlington Church of Christ at 20 North Irving Street displays many of the architectural elements seen at the Virginia Avenue Christian Church in Lyon Park. Built in 1941, the Arlington Church of Christ is constructed of coursed stone accented by limestone coping and surrounds. The original portion of the building, consisting of a one-story, open nave plan, is dominated by a 1954 addition and a crenellated tower, which acts as a hyphen between the main block and the addition. The Clarendon United Methodist Church at North 6<sup>th</sup> and North Irving Street was constructed in 1920 to meet the growing needs of the community. The church is designed in the Colonial Revival style, with Gothic Revival-style elements.

The Columbia Gardens Cemetery, maintained by the Alexandria Park Association, dominates the southern portion of the Ashton Heights community. The current boundaries of the non-sectarian cemetery extend along Arlington Boulevard to the south. Although the corporation had more land extending southward, it was relinquished to the County in 1929 when the boulevard was expanded. The western edge of the cemetery is adjacent to the domestic architecture along Oakland Street. The northern boundary fronts Jackson Street, intersecting with Arlington Boulevard. As one enters through the main gate located on Arlington Boulevard, a park-like view is the first impression. To the right stands the modest one-story office and private dwelling of the managing director. At the head of the bisecting lane is the mausoleum of Admiral George Dewey (1837-1917), which was moved there from Arlington National Cemetery after his body was re-interred in the Washington Cathedral. With an open policy allowing patrons to choose their gravesite and style of marker, there is a mixture of historically inspired monuments and modern markers. Unlike memorial parks that regulated uniformity beginning in the 1950s, the Columbia Gardens Cemetery reflects the changing styles occurring from the first interments in 1917 to the present day.

The Clarendon School, also known as the Matthew Maury School, is located at 3550 Wilson Boulevard. Constructed in two phases, the main block of the building dates from 1910, with a 1954 addition on the rear elevation.<sup>3</sup> The imposing brick building features stylistic elements from the Classical Revival style, an architectural trend fashionable during the period of construction. Featuring brickwork laid in five- and six-course American bond, the school rises two-and-a-half stories with a hipped roof. Set on a raised, stucco-clad foundation, the building is three bays wide and two bays deep. Horizontal massing is

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provided by the tall stuccoed watertable and belt course, the one-story portico over the main entry, the recessed panels between the first- and second-story openings, and the shallow hipped roof with its expansive overhanging eaves. Yet, the symmetrically placed openings, wide mullions, and enclosed pediments on the projecting front bays emphasize verticality. The Clarendon School was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999.

Wilson Boulevard and 10<sup>th</sup> Street North, major transportation corridors extending through Arlington County, bound the Ashton Heights community on the north. As such, there is modern commercial development along this route that provides services to the neighborhood and passing automobile traffic. There are some resources that were constructed during the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that remain. Many of these are automobile-related, reflecting the importance of the car on the development of the suburban neighborhood. Since these buildings are commercial rather than residential, they are not included within the Historic District boundaries.

**Development After 1950**

Ashton Heights experienced little construction after the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as residential buildings had improved most of the interior lots by that time. A few of the remaining unimproved lots, however, have subsequently been improved in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with single-family dwellings. For the most part, these houses are compatible with the historic housing stock seen throughout Ashton Heights. One of the more recent dwellings, compatible to its neighboring building stock, is at 108 North Jackson Street (circa 1990). This house features a Colonial Revival form and characteristics. It is two stories in height and measures five bays across. It is wood-frame construction clad in a brick veneer, and capped with a hipped roof. Features include cast concrete jack-arch lintels with keystones, exterior-end corbelled chimneys, overhanging eaves, and a heavy molded dentilated cornice. The center entrance is recessed, flanked by 5-light sidelights, and features a Colonial Revival door surround with fluted pilasters and a molded entablature. Other examples of this modest infill housing can be seen at 117 North Jackson, 3223 4<sup>th</sup> Street North, 3201 1<sup>st</sup> Place North, and 3218 1<sup>st</sup> Road North.

Although most of the infill housing from this period is compatible, there are a few buildings that are not characteristic of the neighborhood. The split-level dwelling at 629 North Monroe Street is modest in

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details, however, its T-shaped form is not in keeping with the neighborhood. This dwelling was constructed in 1973 and is comprised of two blocks. One section is two stories and gable oriented and the second is one story and eave oriented. The one-story section contains an attached garage and is clad with a brick veneer. The two-story section is clad with a brick veneer and the second story is overhanging and clad with aluminum siding. The off-center doorway is flanked by diamond-pattern sidelights. The roof features overhanging eaves and is clad in asphalt shingles.

**ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Katherine Cole Stevenson and H. Ward Jandl, *Houses by Mail: A Guide to Houses from Sears, Roebuck and Company*, (Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1986), pp. 19-30; Aladdin "*Built in a Day*" *House Catalog, 1917: The Aladdin Company*, (New York, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995), passim.

<sup>2</sup> Kathy Holt Springston, "Sears Houses of Arlington," unpublished brochure.

<sup>3</sup> The Clarendon School is currently under contract to enlarge the rear addition.